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St. Augustine's Number Pneumatology

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Introduction and Context

In studying the theological career of St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 AD), scholars have often employed a framework that pits the early optimist Christian philosopher Augustine against the later pessimist bishop Augustine. Peter Brown's famous depiction of the "lost future" is exemplary for such opinions on Augustine's theological career.[1] Although the once popular claim that Augustine went through "two conversions"—first to Neoplatonism in 386 and eventually to Christianity in 396—has lost support in Augustine scholarship, the more subtle depiction of the "two Augustines" is still very much popular.[2] However, this framework of discontinuity has been challenged by scholars such as Carol Harrison, who argues that there is in fact a significant continuity between his early and later works.[3] These advocates of "continuity" argue that even in his earlier more philosophical works, Augustine's Neoplatonism was always mediated and regulated by his understanding of the Christian tradition, which did not change dramatically in his more mature works.[4] But this is not to disregard the possibility of a gradual intellectual development in Augustine, due to a maturing reflection on the Christian Scriptures

1. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 139–50.
2. Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 15–19.
3. Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*.
4. For example, Harrison identifies the themes of human dependence and the primacy of grace in Augustine's early works (*Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 72–73). Similarly, Michel Barnes and Lewis Ayres have made similar arguments regarding Augustine's trinitarian theology (see Barnes, "De Regnon Reconsidered"; Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*).

and doctrines, as well as a corresponding philosophical reevaluation. Notably for this paper, Chad Gerber has traced the development of Augustine's pro-Nicene pneumatology in his early works, in which the Spirit's role as Love and sustainer of form becomes increasingly clarified.[5] *De libero arbitrio* (*Lib*.) is a particularly interesting work with regards to this debate, since it was written over the long period between 387 and 395: *laicus coepi, presbyter explicavi* ("began as a layman, finished as a presbyter").[6] In a sense, the work as a whole reveals the thought of both the early and more mature Augustine, and thus it is an important text for understanding his intellectual development.[7] As one would expect in such a work, elements characteristic of both his early philosophical writings and latter more explicitly doctrinal writings are identifiable in it. Particularly for our purposes, *Lib*. 2, composed in Hippo after his ordination in 391, serves as a useful text for attempting to understand the early theology—both philosophical and doctrinal—of Augustine the priest.[8]

An often-neglected aspect of Augustine's early philosophical formation is his reception of Neopythagoreanism. In the Neopythagorean tradition—a strand of Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism which emphasized the mathematical sciences (especially arithmetic and music)—*number* (ἀριθμός, *numerus*) names the fundamental principle of rationality and harmony that undergirds the coherent existence of the cosmos and all individual beings within it.[9] For example, for Nicomachus of Gerasa, num-

5. Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*.
6. Augustine, *Persev*. 12.30.
7. See, e.g., Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will*, 17–27.
8. Saint Augustine of Hippo, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, xvii.
9. In fact, Neopythagoreanism likely had very little to do with the historical Pythagoras and his followers, for it was more so an intellectual movement of mathematicising Platonism rather than a continuation of the pre-Socratic philosophical school which Aristotle described in *Metaph.* 987a–987b. Although Aristotle famously criticized his teacher Plato for succumbing to "Pythagorean" influence, it is likely that Plato's mathematical philosophy in *De republica* and *Timaeus* was his own innovation rather than a genuine doctrine of Pythagoras and his successors. In particular, Neopythagoreanism was a school of Platonism that tended to elevate arithmetic over dialectics in terms of methodology, and numbers over Forms in terms of metaphysics (see, e.g., Albertson, *Mathematical*

bers not only lead the soul toward the contemplation of the eternal and immaterial truth beyond the material realm—as in Plato's *De republica*[10]—but also constitute the very principle behind all physical reality and even of the ethical and spiritual life.[11]

As Aimé Solignac convincingly demonstrated, it is likely that Augustine had encountered certain Neopythagorean writings by philosophers such as Varro, Cicero, and Nicomachus during his time at Milan.[12] It is not surprising, then, that one discovers elements of Neopythagoreanism throughout his early corpus, most notably in works such as *De musica*, *De ordine*, and *De quantitate animae*. In fact, Solignac could even say that Augustine transmits to us "a sort of Christian Pythagoreanism."[13] Thus, if there is considerable continuity in Augustine's intellectual development, one would expect to find traces of such Christian Pythagoreanism in his more mature works also. Again, *De libero arbitrio* is a particularly interesting work in this regard, since its second book involves a sustained argument regarding *numerus*.

De libero arbitrio is Augustine's final work written in a dialogue form, and it is presented as a dialogue between Augustine and Evodius.[14] As the title shows, the main topic of the book is the freedom of the will. In particular, *Lib*. 2 deals with the questions of (1) how we can know that God exists and (2) whether all that exists is good, in order to show whether free will is good and thereby from God. Augustine outlines the argument in *Lib*. 2.3.7 as follows:

Theologies, 23–39). For a detailed survey of the Neopythagorean tradition of Iamblichus and Proclus, see O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*.

10. Plato, *Rep*. 525a–531d.

11. O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*, 16–19.

12. Solignac, "Doxographies et Manuels,"120–37.

13. Solignac, "Doxographies et Manuels," 131. Cf. Janby, "Christ and Pythagoras"; and Albertson, *Mathematical Theologies*, 69–80. For a study of an incipient form of a Christian Pythagoreanism of Clement of Alexandria and the Valentinians, see Kalvesmaki, *Theology of Arithmetic*.

14. As Simon Harrison says, however, "[t]he name 'Evodius' . . . is not found in any of the manuscripts and was first printed in Amerbach's version of 1506" (*Augustine's Way into the Will*, 2).

> Let us inquire in this order, if you agree: First, how is it clear that God exists? Next, do all things, insofar as they are good, come from God? Finally, is free will to be counted among these goods? Once we have answers to these, I think it will be quite apparent whether free will was given to humans rightly.[15]

But how does *numerus* contribute to these discussions? First, following a typical Pythagorean line of argument, number demonstrates the existence of an eternal and immutable reality which transcends our rationality, thereby providing evidence for the divine (2.7.20–2.15.40). Moreover, *numerus* proceeds from God and hence is good. Since all created things maintain their forms by the virtue of their being "filled with number" (*numerosa*), all things are thus good and come from God, insofar as they exist. Therefore, free will is good and hence is from God, and sin—caused by the turning away of free will—has no real being. A more detailed exposition of these arguments will reveal the pneumatological character of *numerus* and, as a result, grant us an insight into his intellectual development with regards to pneumatology and Pythagoreanism.

Numerus *and* Sapientia *(2.8.20–2.15.40)*

In the first part of his argument, Augustine attempts to demonstrate the ability of our reason to grasp the eternal and unchangeable Divine nature, through a discussion regarding the immutable nature of *numerus*. To Augustine's question whether one can find anything that all rational minds can see in common, Evodius answers,

> The rationality and truth of number (*ratio et veritas numeri*) is present to all rational beings. … When anyone perceives it, it is not changed nor transformed, like food, into its perceiver. Nor is there a flaw in it

15. *Quaeramus autem hoc ordine, si placet: primum, quomodo manifestum est Deum esse; deinde, utrum ab illo sint quaecumque in quantumcumque sunt bona; postremo, utrum in bonis numeranda sit voluntas libera. Quibus compertis satis apparebit, ut opinor, utrum recte homini data sit* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.3.7 [*PL* 32:1241]).

> when anyone makes a mistake; it remains true and intact, while the person is all the more in error the less he sees it.[16]

Here, following the Platonic and Pythagorean tradition, Augustine presents *numerus* as the exemplary entity that demonstrates the universal, objective, and transcendent reality above our rationality. Augustine then endeavors to refute the Aristotelian conjecture that numbers are merely abstractions from physical objects,[17] by arguing that the intelligible structure of arithmetic operations are not necessarily learned through physical objects.[18] He then further demonstrates the Platonic position on numbers through the observation that one can never truly perceive *one* in the sensible realm, since "no physical object is truly and simply *one*."[19] Nevertheless, we must somehow know *one*, since it is only by knowing *one* that we can enumerate *many*.[20] Moreover, we could not be certain that the law of arithmetic progression holds true for *all* numbers if we only came to know numbers through sense-perception, since they are innumerable; but we are indeed somehow certain that this law is "firm and uncorrupted for all numbers."[21] Therefore, it must be

16. *ratio et veritas numeri omnibus ratiocinantibus praesto est . . . nec cum eam quisque percipit, in sui perceptoris quasi alimentum vertatur atque mutetur; nec cum in ea quisque fallitur, ipsa deficiat, sed ea vera et integra permanente, ille in errore sit tanto amplius, quanto minus eam videt* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.8.20 [*PL* 32:1251]).

17. Aristotle famously argued against the Platonic Academy that numbers do not have a prior, separate ontological existence apart from physical objects that it enumerates. Hence, numbers only exist as dependent on sensible reality, since they are mental abstractions from countable objects (*Metaph*. 1083a–1083b).

18. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.8.21. But, *contra* Plotinus, Augustine does not necessarily distinguish between the substantial number and the monadic number: here, *numerus* is both mathematical *and* ontological, quantitative *and* qualitative. This is especially significant considering Augustine's distinction between *forma* and *numerus* that will be discussed below. For Plotinus's understanding of ἀριθμός, as well as a summary of the Platonic and Aristotelian theories, see Slaveva-Griffin, *Plotinus on Number*, 56–70.

19. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.8.22 (Saint Augustine of Hippo, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, 47).

20. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.8.22.

21. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.8.23 (Saint Augustine of Hippo, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, 48).

the case that *numerus* and mathematics belong to the intelligible, remaining "pure and unchangeable . . . seen in common by all who reason."[22]

Having proven the intelligible nature of *numerus* through standard Pythagorean reasoning, Augustine goes on to support his thesis through the Scriptures: "It is not without reason that *numerus* is connected to *sapientia* in the Scriptures: 'My heart and I have gone around so that I might know and consider and seek *sapientia* and *numerus*' (Eccl. 7:25)."[23] After discussing the "true and unchangeable rules of wisdom,"[24] Augustine then proceeds to consider exactly how *numerus* and *sapientia* are related to each other, and whether *sapientia* is more worthy of admiration than *numerus*. He contends that since *numerus* and *sapientia* belong to the same intelligible realm: "it is indisputable that they are one and the same thing" (*una quaedam eademque res est*). For whenever he contemplates the "residence" (*habitaculum*) or "seat" (*sedem*) of *numerus*, he is "far removed from the body" but must eventually "return—exhausted—to the things of our [realm] (*haec nostra*)," and the same happens when he "thinks most vigilantly and intently" about *sapientia*.[25] Again, he argues from scriptural exegesis:

> Still, since it is nonetheless said of Wisdom in Scripture that it "strongly affects [all things] from the one end to the other and pleasantly ar-

22. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.8.24 (Saint Augustine of Hippo, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, 49).

23. *non enim frustra in sanctis Libris sapientiae coniunctus est numerus, ubi dictum est: Circuivi ego et cor meum, ut scirem, et considerarem, et quaererem sapientiam et numerum* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.8.24 [*PL* 32:1253]).

24. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.10.29 (Saint Augustine of Hippo, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, 54).

25. *Nam cum incommutabilem veritatem numerorum mecum ipse considero, et eius quasi cubile ac penetrale vel regionem quamdam, vel si quod aliud nomen aptum inveniri potest, quo nominemus quasi habitaculum quoddam sedemque numerorum; longe removeor a corpore: et inveniens fortasse aliquid quod cogitare possim, non tamen aliquid inveniens quod verbis proferre sufficiam, redeo tamquam lassatus in haec nostra, ut loqui possim, et ea quae ante oculos sita sunt dico, sicut dici solent. Hoc mihi accidit etiam cum de sapientia quantum valeo, vigilantissime atque intentissime cogito* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.30 [*PL* 32:1257]). Note the similarity to Augustine's description of his and Monica's "vision at Ostia" in Augustine, *Conf*. 9.10.24.

> ranges all things" [Wis 8:1]; perhaps the power (*potentia*) that "strongly affects [all things] from the one end to the other" is called *numerus*, while that which "pleasantly arranges all things" is then called *sapientia* in the strict sense, although both are of one and the same Wisdom.[26]

Numerus and *sapientia* can be distinguished in that while even the lowliest beings all have their own numbers, wisdom is only given to rational souls.[27]

But when we contemplate the numbers that we find impressed upon creatures, we realize that they "transcend our minds and remain unchangeable in truth itself."[28] Augustine then offers a very interesting analogy:

> For instance, in a fire one senses brightness and heat as consubstantial (*consubstantialis*), so to speak, and they cannot be separated from one another. Yet the heat affects only what is moved close to it, whereas the brightness is diffused far and wide. Likewise, the power of intelligence that is in *sapientia* warms those close to it, such as rational souls; whereas things that are farther away, such as bodies, are not affected by the heat of *sapientia* but are filled with the light of numbers (*perfundit lumine numerorum*).[29]

26. *verumtamen quoniam nihilominus in divinis Libris de sapientia dicitur, quod attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et disponit omnia suaviter, ea potentia qua fortiter a fine usque ad finem attingit, numerus fortasse dicitur: ea vero qua disponit omnia suaviter, sapientia proprie iam vocatur; cum sit utrumque unius eiusdemque sapientiae* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.30 [*PL* 32:1258]). The early Augustine sometimes uses the word *potentia* to indicate the divine persona (e.g., *tripotentem patrem et filiem et spiritum sanctum* [*Ord*. 2.5.16]). This has precedence in the Latin pro-Nicene tradition, namely in Victorinus (see Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 29–31).

27. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.31.

28. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.31 (Saint Augustine of Hippo, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, 55).

29. *Sed quemadmodum in uno igne consubstantialis, ut ita dicam, sentitur fulgor et calor, nec separari ab invicem possunt; tamen ad ea calor pervenit, quae prope admoventur, fulgor vero etiam longius latiusque diffunditur: sic intellegentiae potentia, quae inest sapientiae, propinquiora fervescunt, sicuti sunt animae rationales; ea vero quae remotiora sunt, sicuti corpora, non attingit calore sapiendi, sed perfundit lumine numerorum* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.32 [*PL* 32:1258]).

Just as a fire's brightness and heat are "consubstantial" and inseparable from one another, so are *numerus* and *sapientia* consubstantial and inseparable. And just as heat affects only what is close to the fire, while brightness affects even what is far away; so is "the heat of *sapientia*" present to only those who are near to itself, whereas "the light of *numerus*" fills all things. Therefore, both *numerus* and *sapientia*—of which "it is certainly evident that each is true and unchangeably true"[30]—inseparably act in unison to reveal the unchangeable Truth (*incommutabilem veritatem*), [31] "which is our God who liberated us from death, that is, from the condition of sin." [32] And in case there was any ambiguity, Augustine later clarifies that this *sapientia* is indeed the eternal *Logos* "begotten by the Eternal Father [Who] is equal to Him."[33]

An Aporetic Conclusion?

David Albertson observes in Augustine, in particular in *De libero arbitrio*, a tension between *numerus* and *sapientia* as competing mediating principles, which eventually leads him to abandon the project of a Christian Pythagoreanism entirely.[34] Albertson reads Augustine as ultimately failing to formulate a resolution between *sapientia* and *numerus* and hence having to "accept an aporetic conclusion"[35] in 2.11.32, which reads,

> Even if we cannot be clear whether *numerus* is in *sapientia* or from *sapientia*, or whether *sapientia* itself is from *numerus* or is in *sapientia*, or whether it can be shown that both are the name of a single thing (*res*); it is certainly evident that both are true, and unchangeably true.[36]

30. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.32 (Saint Augustine of Hippo, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, 56).

31. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.12.33 (*PL* 32:1258).

32. *et ipse est Deus noster qui nos liberat a morte, id est a conditione peccati* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.13.37 [*PL* 32:1261]).

33. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.15.39 (Saint Augustine of Hippo, *On the Free Choice of the Will*, 61).

34. Albertson, *Mathematical Theologies*, 69–71.

35. Albertson, *Mathematical Theologies*, 73.

36. *etsi clarum nobis esse non potest utrum in sapientia, vel ex sapientia numerus, an ipsa sapientia ex numero, an in numero sit, an utrumque nomen*

Hence, for Albertson, Augustine's Christian Pythagoreanism remains a tragic "what-could-have-been." His treatment of Augustine's later works is outside the scope of this paper,[37] but in his reading of *De libero arbitrio*, Albertson seems to misapprehend Augustine's logic in 2.11.30–2.11.32. If his logic is not already clear from Augustine's repeated assertion that *sapientia* and *numerus* are "one and the same thing" (*una quaedam eademque res est*),[38] his usage of the particular word *consubstantialis* should be enough to render the logic unambiguous.[39]

Augustine is appropriating the language of *consubstantialis* from Latin pro-Nicene theology, which signifies an absolute *unity and equality of substance* despite a distinction of *Persona* and appropriation.[40] Central to the Latin pro-Nicene tradition—of theologians such as Marius Victorinus, Hilary of Poitiers, and Ambrose of Milan—was the doctrine of *inseparable operations*, that the three divine Personae always act inseparably, because they are of one and the same substance.[41] Thus, the pro-Nicene logic of consubstantiality, applied to *sapientia* and *numerus*, implies that *sapientia* and *numerus* are indeed one and equal and that—despite their distinct appropriations—their operations are ultimately inseparable. Augustine makes this point explicit by stating that they "cannot be separated from one another" (*nec separari ab invicem possunt*).[42] Then, there is no conflict between *sapientia* and *numerus* as separate mediating principles, nor does Augustine believe that they belong to a different *genus*, as Albertson argues.[43] Rather, as light and heat both derive from the

unius rei possit ostendi; illud certe manifestum est utrumque verum esse, et incommutabiliter verum (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.32 [*PL* 32:1258]).

37. For example, his argument that Augustine's understanding of the Word as *numerus sine numerum* is somehow a rejection of Pythagoreanism is unsubstantiated, especially considering Plotinus's own description of the One as the "measure without measure" in Plotinus, *Enn*. 6.7.32.

38. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.30 (*PL* 32:1257).

39. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.32 (*PL* 32:1258).

40. For example, see Augustine, *Fid*. *symb*. 9.16.

41. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 43–59.

42. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.32 (*PL* 32:1258).

43. Albertson, *Mathematical Theologies*, 73.

same fire and are thus consubstantial and operate inseparably, *numerus* and *sapientia* both derive from the same eternal, immutable, and divine Truth; hence they are consubstantial and act inseparably with this Truth and with one another. Indeed, his conclusion is not aporetic but *apophatic*: it is a confession that "no visible analogy of invisible things can apply in every aspect," instead of an admission that there is an irresolvable contradiction.[44] As one can observe from his other writings such as *De fide et symbol*—written around the same period (395) as *De libero arbitrio*—such apophatic acknowledgment always accompanies Augustine's use of Trinitarian analogies.[45]

A Trinitarian Analogy

The analogy of fire, light, and heat and the language of *consubstantialis* seems, at first glance, to be a Trinitarian analogy, although this particular triad appears to be a novelty in the Latin pro-Nicene tradition.[46] Nevertheless, Ambrose's hymn *Splendor Paternae gloriae*—which Olivier du Roy has identified as a source for Augustine's early pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology[47]—at least identifies the Father with the Sun and the Spirit with its "brightness" (*iubar*).[48] Interestingly, the triad does appear in Ephrem the Syrian's *Hymns on Faith* 40 as an analogy for the Trinity, as well as a similar analogy of sun, light, and heat in *Hymn* 73.[49] John of Damascus also famously uses the analogy of the sun, rays, and heat when describing the Trinity in *On Heresies* 108.[50] Although

44. *Non enim ulla visibilis similitudo invisibili rei potest ad omnem convenientiam coaptari* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.11.32 [*PL* 32:1258]).

45. Augustine, *Fid. symb*. 9.17.

46. To my knowledge, the analogy of fire, light, and heat does not appear in any of the writings by the Latin pro-Nicene theologians prior to Augustine. One could conjecture that Augustine may have received this orally from another pro-Nicene theologian, such as Ambrose.

47. du Roy, *L'Intelligence de La Foi*, 162.

48. Walpole, *Early Latin Hymns*, 35–36.

49. Saint Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith*, 225–28; 349–351. Ayres notes that Ephrem's use of this analogy is "distinct" in the tradition (*Nicaea and its Legacy*, 233–34).

50. Saint John, *Writings*, 162.

it is quite obvious that Augustine could not have been familiar with either the Syriac or the Damascene, they serve as evidence for a hypothesis that the Trinitarian analogy of fire, light, and heat had been transmitted within the pro-Nicene tradition in some form. Moreover, as Isidoros Katsos suggests, in the context of fourth-century Christian metaphysics, radiant light was often identified as the *second hypostasis* of fire and ambient light as its *third hypostasis*.[51] Hence, the most analogous example that one could potentially trace to Augustine—directly or indirectly—is from *Oration* 31 (*Fifth Theological Oration*) of Gregory of Nazianzus,[52] where he mentions the analogy of the Sun, the ray, and the light as he searches for an appropriate analogy for the unity of the three divine hypostases.[53] Considering that the Cappadocian Fathers regarded heat as a property of the radiant light,[54] this may very well have been the source for Augustine's analogy of fire, heat, and brightness. Indeed, Augustine employs the same Trinitarian analogy much earlier in the *Soliloquiorum libri II* (386–387):

> Therefore, just as there are three things that can be noticed—that it is, that it radiates, and that it illuminates—so too in this most hidden God

51. Katsos, *Metaphysics of Light*, 168.

52. Gregory Nazianzen's influence on the late Augustine is quite well recognized, for example, in Lienhard, "Augustine of Hippo." In particular, Lienhard notes an "impressionistic parallel" between the *Fifth Theological Oration* and Augustine's *Contra Maximinum Arianum*. Although Rufinus's translation of Gregory's orations did not begin until 399, one could perhaps hypothesize that even the early Augustine may have been directly or indirectly familiar with the analogy from the *Oration*, through an intermediary figure such as Ambrose or Jerome.

53. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or*. 31.32 (*NPNF*[2] 7:657). Gregory ultimately ends up rejecting this analogy as adequate, for he must "let the images and the shadows go."

54. Katsos, *Metaphysics of Light*, 168. Katsos cites Basil the Great, *Hexaëmeron* 6.8 (*GCS* 103:2–3) and Gregory of Nyssa, *In Hexaemeron* 33 (*GNO* 4.1:15–16).

> whom you wish to understand, there are three things—that He is, that He is understood, that He makes all other things understood.[55]

It is particularly noteworthy that here Augustine explicitly identifies the Son as the radiation—which, again, is equivalent to heat in the context of fourth-century metaphysics—and the Spirit as the illumination. The role of the Son as the one making God to be understood and the Spirit's function of "making all other things understood" also parallels the descriptions in *De libero arbitrio* of *sapientia* and *numerus*, respectively.

In any case, it is quite evident that Augustine *is* employing a Trinitarian analogy in 2.11.32. But this raises the question: is Augustine actually alluding to a *Trinitarian theology* of *sapientia* and *numerus*? In other words, are the *sapientia* and *numerus* of *lib. arb.* to be identified with the divine *Personae*, namely the Son and the Spirit? As noted above, the following passage seems to make it clear that at least this *Sapientia* is the Son of God:

> If it disturbs you that *Sapientia* has a Father, according to the hallowed teaching of Christ that we have received in faith; remember that we have also received this in faith, that the *Sapientia* begotten by the Eternal Father is equal to Him.[56]

Then, the language of *numerus* being consubstantial with *sapientia*, the Son, may indeed imply that this *numerus* is none other than the Holy Spirit. In fact, Augustine's description that *numerus* has the same heavenly residence as *sapientia*, where God the eternal Truth resides, seems to support such a reading. An account of a *numerus* or *ratio* pneumatology in the early Augustine—for example in *Ord.* 2—also has precedence in du Roy's work.[57] But,

55. *Ergo quomodo in hoc sole tria quaedam licet animadvertere; quod est, quod fulget, quod illuminat: ita in illo secretissimo Deo quem vis intellegere, tria quaedam sunt; quod est, quod intellegitur, et quod caetera facit intellegi* (Augustine, *Solil.* 1.7.15 [*PL* 32:877]).

56. *Nam si te hoc movet quod apud sacrosanctam disciplinam Christi in fidem recepimus, esse Patrem Sapientiae; memento nos etiam hoc in fidem accepisse, quod aeterno Patri sit aequalis quae ab ipso genita est Sapientia* (Augustine, *Lib.* 2.15.39 [*PL* 32:1262]).

57. du Roy, *L'Intelligence de La Foi*, 109–48. Although, as Gerber points out, du Roy is wrong to interpret this just as an uncritical adoption of the

of course, one cannot so easily discount a reading that *numerus* is just another function of the Son, alongside *sapientia*, rather than of the distinct hypostasis of the Spirit. *If* the *numerus* of *lib. arb.* is a pneumatological category, one should expect to find some language of Personal agency, a clearer distinction between *numerus* from the role of the Son, and correspondence with Augustine's other pneumatological writings from the similar period. Augustine's argument in the following section of *lib. arb.* II provides exactly such evidence.

Numerus *as the Divine Agent of Providence (2.16.41–2.17.46)*

After arguing that *numerus* demonstrates the existence of the eternal and immutable God, Augustine continues towards the next stage of his argument: that all things that exist are good insofar as they exist and hence are from God. He brings attention to another passage of Scripture, namely Wis 6:16: "[Wisdom] appears to them favorably in their paths and meets them in all providence."[58] Augustine's exposition of this passage is worth quoting in length:

> Whichever way you turn, by the footprints (*vestigiis*) imprinted upon its works, [*Sapientia*] speaks to you. When you are slipping away into exterior things by their external forms, it calls you back within; so that you see that whatever delights you in a body, and entices you by your bodily senses, is 'full of number' (*numerosum*). You seek where it is from and return into yourself, understanding that you cannot approve or disapprove of what you come into contact with by the bodily senses, unless within you there are some laws (*leges*) of beauty, according to which you judge the beautiful things that you sense externally.[59]

Plotinian third hypostasis. I ultimately agree with Gerber that there is not quite yet a *pneumatology* of *ratio/numerus* in his pre-Thagaste writings, although I would argue that there is in *Ord*. 2 an incipient seed of the *number pneumatology* that we discover in *De libero arbitrio* (see Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 62–68, 85–90).

58. *In viis ostendet se illis hilariter, et omni providentia occurret illis* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.41 [*PL* 32.1263]).

59. *Quoquo enim te verteris, vestigiis quibusdam, quae operibus suis impressit, loquitur tibi, et te in exteriora relabentem, ipsis exteriorum formis intro revocat; ut quidquid te delectat in corpore, et per corporeos illicit sensus, videas*

Numerus manifests the "divine footprints (*vestigia*)" impressed upon Creation, the eternal and unchangeable aspect of reality that is discovered amongst its temporality and mutability—the trace of the Creator's work hidden beneath each creature's creatureliness. Indeed, every created thing "has being precisely to the extent that they are 'full of number' (*numerosa*)"[60]: *numerus* is what constantly holds them together coherently to maintain their form (*forma*), without which they would cease to exist.[61] This light of numbers (*lucem numerorum*) is also "the internal judge that observes the numbers above" (*interno iudici supernos numeros intuenti*) that prescribes the standard for beauty, as the craftsman applies his craft. It is *numerus* that "moves the craftsman's hands" in a sort of dance that is "full of rhythm and harmony" (*numerose*)[62]—"ask, therefore, what pleases you in dancing; *numerus* will answer to you: 'Here I am!'"[63] In short, *numerus* is the principle of coherence and harmony for all forms and movements. But here, we also observe the description of *numerus* as a Personal agent, who not only judges beauty and animates bodies but also calls attention to itself through its activity, so that the soul may be kindled to draw near to the warmth of *Sapientia*.

esse numerosum, et quaeras unde sit, et in teipsum redeas, atque intellegas te id quod attingis sensibus corporis, probare aut improbare non posse, nisi apud te habeas quasdam pulchritudinis leges, ad quas referas quaeque pulchra sentis exterius (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.41 [*PL* 32.1263]).

60. Cf. The Neopythagorean philosopher Syrianus's description of the Dyad: "the Dyad *qua* principle is the author of all things of generative power and procession and multiplicity (*plêthos*) and multiplication (*pollaplasiasmos*), and *rouses up all things and stirs them* to the generation of forethought for and care of what is secondary to them, and further *fills all* the divine and intellective and psychic and natural and sensible realms (*diaskosmoi*) *with the numbers proper to them*" (*Syrianus: On Aristotle's Metaphysics 13–14*, 112.35–113.4 [emphasis mine]).

61. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.42 (*PL* 32.1263–64).

62. *Numerus* here has an intended double meaning of "number" and "rhythm/harmony," as it does in *Mus*. 6 (see Harrison, *On Music*, 13–16).

63. *Quaere deinde artificis ipsius membra quis moveat; numerus erit: nam moventur etiam illa numerose . . . Quaere ergo quid in saltatione delectet; respondebit tibi numerus: Ecce sum* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.42 [*PL* 32.1263–64]).

When the soul—aroused by the call of *numerus*—recognizes that itself is also "full of number," it realizes that it is only by its internal *leges numerorum* that it can discern the *numerus* outside of itself. Thus, the soul turns its gaze inward to seek the *numerus* within. And by returning into itself, it transcends the sensible realm and sees "the everlasting Number" (*Numerum sempiternum*).[64] Then, "*Sapientia* will shine upon [the soul] from its inner seat and from its hidden chambre of Truth."[65] But when the mind's eye becomes too weak to maintain its gaze upon the *Numerus sempiternus*, the soul may return to the path that Wisdom appeared favorably, to contemplate Her footsteps—the presence of *numerus* as revealed within the created order.[66] As long as the soul remains on the path of *Sapientia*, *numerus* will revitalize the mind's eye so that the soul may seek the vision of *Numerus sempiternus* once more. However, when the soul turns away from the light of *numerus* and towards a shadow, the mind's eye becomes darkened and eventually "unable to see what exists in the highest degree." In such a state, the soul becomes susceptible to evil—which is none other than the turning away from true being.[67]

The immutable *numerus* that gives all beings their coherence, beauty, and being points towards "some eternal and unchangeable Form," Augustine explains as follows:

> Do not doubt, that there is some eternal and unchangeable Form (*formam aeternam et incommutabilem*), such that these changeable things are not interrupted, but with measured movements and distinct variations of forms (*formarum*), traverse through time like poetic verses. This [Form] is not contained in nor diffused spatially, nor is it extended or varied temporally; but through it all [things] are able to re-

64. *Numerus sempiternus* most likely refers to the divine nature in general, as "seeing the *numerus sempiternus*" is a description of the beatific vision, rather than specifically referring to the Person of either the Spirit or the Son.

65. *iam tibi sapientia de ipsa interiore sede fulgebit, et de ipso secretario veritatis* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.42 [*PL* 32.1264]).

66. Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.42 (*PL* 32.1264).

67. *Ex quo incipit non posse videre quod summe est* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.43 [*PL* 32.1264]).

> ceive form, and to fulfill and perform the numbers pertinent to the places and times according to their kind.[68]

That is, the eternal and unchangeable Form—which transcends space and time—gives individual forms to each and every created thing, so that every creature may continue to exist by their changing forms and movements through their *numerus*. All changeable things must receive their form, but nothing gives form to itself; hence there must be an immutable and everlasting Form that "while remaining in itself, makes all things new [Wis 7:27]."[69] Augustine identifies this *Forma incommutabilis* as the divine Providence, "through which all changeable things subsist, so that they are fulfilled and performed by the numbers according to their forms" (*ut formarum suarum numeris impleantur et agantur*). And, returning to Wis 6:16, this unchangeable Form and divine Providence is the Wisdom of God "who meets them in all providence." What is notable here is that *numerus* is distinguished from *forma*: the latter defines what sort of being something is, the former how its *forma* remains coherent and moves through space and time.[70]

Since all good things that exist—those that are beautiful by being full of *numerus*—exist by the virtue of their forms, but they must have received their forms from the *Forma aeterna*. Hence, "all good things whatsoever, however great, however small, cannot have their being other than from God."[71] But recall that

68. *noli dubitare, ut ista mutabilia non intercipiantur, sed dimensis motibus, et distincta varietate formarum, quasi quosdam versus temporum peragant, esse aliquam formam aeternam et incommutabilem; quae neque contineatur et quasi diffundatur locis, neque protendatur atque varietur temporibus, per quam cuncta ista formari valeant, et pro suo genere implere atque agere locorum ac temporum numeros* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.44 [*PL* 32.1264–65]).

69. *Mutabis ea et mutabuntur; tu autem idem es* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.17.45 [*PL* 32.1265]).

70. Therefore, Gerber is not quite correct to say that in *Lib*. 2, "[n]umber . . . is a synonym for *forma*/*species* and is a matter of quality not quantity" (*Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 51). Instead, as he correctly identifies Augustine's eventual distinction of form from order, *numerus* in *lib. arb*. must be identified with order rather than form.

71. *Quamobrem quantacumque bona, quamvis magna, quamvis minima, nisi ex Deo esse non possunt* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.17.46 [*PL* 32.1265]).

these things only "have forms because they have *numerus*."[72] Moreover, this divine Providence "does not permit the movements of these things, as they deteriorate or advance, from transgressing the laws of their own numbers."[73] At the end of *Lib*. 2, Augustine summarizes as thus:

> Do not hesitate to attribute to God as its Maker everything in which you see measure, number, and order (*mensuram et numerum et ordinem*). Once you remove these things entirely, nothing at all will remain. For even if some inchoate vestige of form (*aliqua formae alicuius inchoatio*) were to remain, where you find neither *mensura, ordo*, nor *numerus*—since wherever these exist, the form is complete—it is necessary that you also take away that inchoate vestige of form, which appears to be some underlying material to be completed by its Maker. For if the completion of a form is good, the inchoate vestige of form is already something good. Thus, if every good were taken away, what will indeed be left is not something, but instead absolutely nothing. Yet every good is from God. Therefore, there is no nature that is not from God.[74]

Therefore, the *Forma aeterna et incommutabilis* and *numerus* cooperate as the divine agents of providence: the unchangeable *Forma* grants forms to individual creatures and thereby their very

72. *formas habent, quia numeros habent* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.42 [*PL* 32.1263]).

73. *motusque ipsos rerum deficientium vel proficientium excedere numerorum suorum leges non sinit* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.17.46 [*PL* 32.1266]).

74. *Omnem quippe rem ubi mensuram et numerum et ordinem videris, Deo artifici tribuere ne cuncteris. Unde autem ista penitus detraxeris, nihil omnino remanebit: quia etsi remanserit aliqua formae alicuius inchoatio, ubi neque mensuram neque numerum neque ordinem invenias, quia ubicumque ista sunt, forma perfecta est; oportet auferas etiam ipsam inchoationem formae, quae tamquam materies ad perficiendum subiacere videtur artifici. Si enim formae perfectio bonum est, nonnullum iam bonum est et formae inchoatio. Ita, detracto penitus omni bono, non quidem nonnihil, sed omnino nihil remanebit. Omne autem bonum ex Deo: nulla ergo natura est quae non sit ex Deo* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.20.54 [*PL* 32.1270]). Here, *mensura, numerus*, and *ordo* is from Wis 11:21, a theologically significant passage for Augustine throughout his career. But what is interesting is that this triad is distinguished from *forma*, albeit only in a strict sense. Augustine will later develop this into his doctrine of *rationes seminales* (see Oliver, "Augustine").

existence, and *numerus* sustains their forms by providing laws (*leges*) of coherent and harmonious movement and being. Eternal Form and *numerus* operate inseparably in the divine work of creation and its sustenance.

A Number Pneumatology

Lewis Ayres, following Chad Gerber, characterizes Augustine's early pneumatology as an *order pneumatology*, "which ascribes to the Spirit the function of maintaining created things in their particular individuated and formed existence."[75] For example, in *De vera religione*, written between 390 and 391, Augustine describes the creative act of the Father, Son, and the Spirit towards Creation as follows:

> [E]very intelligent, animal, and corporeal creature, from the same creator Trinity, receives its being to the extent that it exists, has its own form, and is governed by the highest order (*ordinatissime*) . . . Every particular thing or substance or essence or nature, or whatever else you like to call it, has simultaneously about it these three aspects: that it is one something, and that it is distinguished from other things by its proper form (*specie*), and that it does not transgress the order (*ordo*) of things.[76]

A similar idea also appears in *Epistula* 11, written in 389:

> There is no nature . . . and no substance whatsoever that does not have in itself, and does not display before itself, these three aspects: first, that it exists; second, that it is this or that; and third, that it remains as it was to the extent it can. The first reveals the very cause (*causam ipsam*) of the nature from which all things come; the second reveals the form (*speciem*) by which all things are fashioned and formed in a cer-

75. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 61.

76. *omnis intellectualis et animalis et corporalis creatura, ab eadem Trinitate creatrice esse in quantum est, et speciem suam habere et ordinatissime administrari . . . Omnis enim res, vel substantia, vel essentia, vel natura, vel si quo alio verbo melius enuntiatur, simul haec tria habet; ut et unum aliquid sit, et specie propria discernatur a ceteris, et rerum ordinem non excedat* (Augustine, *Ver. rel.* 7.13 [*CCSL* 32:196–97]).

> tain manner; the third reveals a certain permanence (*manentiam*), so to speak, in which all things exist.[77]

The activity of the Spirit that is revealed by this third aspect of nature is the maintenance of creaturely form, and thereby of their existence. Indeed, as Gerber points out, Augustine begins to delineate—without separating—"form" (*species/forma*) from *ordo* in his Thagaste writings; and the role of *ordo* that emerges from his order pneumatology after 389 is "the realization or the sustaining of form in created things."[78] *Epistula* 11 makes it clear that "form . . . is not without reason . . . attributed to the Son."[79] Moreover, the letter concludes with another set of triadic questions: whether it exists, what it is, and how to evaluate it.[80] If the Trinitarian analogy holds, then another aspect of Augustine's order pneumatology would be the Spirit as the absolute standard of approval or disapproval, that is, of beauty, harmony, coherence, and truth.[81]

In discussing his early pneumatology, Ayres also notes that "Augustine frequently hypostasizes *ordo* as that which enables our return to contemplation: 'order is that which, if we hold to it in life, will lead us to God.'"[82] *Epistula* 11 attributes to the Spirit the gift and function of "a certain interior and ineffable tenderness and sweetness of remaining in this knowledge [of the Father through the Son] and of scorning all mortal things."[83] As Gerber summarizes, in Augustine's early writings, "the Spirit is principal-

77. *Nulla natura est . . . et omnino nulla substantia quae non in se habeat haec tria, et prae se gerat: primo ut sit, deinde ut hoc vel illud sit, tertio ut in eo quod est maneat quantum potest. Primum illud causam ipsam naturae ostentat, ex qua sunt omnia; alterum, speciem per quam fabricantur, et quodammodo formantur omnia; tertium, manentiam quamdam, ut ita dicam, in qua sunt omnia* (Augustine, *Epistula* 11.3 [*PL* 33.76]).

78. Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 166.

79. *Species . . . non sine ratione . . . Filio tribuntur* (Augustine, *Epistula* 11.4 [*PL* 33.76]).

80. Augustine, *Epistula* 11.4 (*PL* 33.77).

81. Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 177–78.

82. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 64 (citing Augustine, *Ord.* 1.9.27 [*CCSL* 29.102]).

83. *quaedam interior et ineffabilis suavitas atque dulcedo, in ista cognitione permanendi contemnendique omnia mortalia* (Augustine, *Epistula* 11.4 [*PL* 33.77]).

ly the divine agent who begins the soul's ascent, causing it to seek the Truth, love its God, and so on."[84] Then, the Spirit of Augustine's order pneumatology not only sustains and animates the forms of creatures but also the soul's contemplation of God. In a sense, these are merely two aspects of one operation, since the proper *ordo* of the soul is the enjoyment of God through *Sapientia*.[85]

If Gerber is correct that in Augustine's early order pneumatology, "[t]he Spirit keeps corporeal things from reaching the formlessness and non-being from which they have been drawn by God, [and] the Spirit also maintains the soul reformed through Wisdom,"[86] perhaps one may also speak of a *number pneumatology* that emerges in *De libero arbitrio*. The similarities between Augustine's early concept of *ordo* and the description of *numerus* in *De libero arbitrio* is quite evident. *Numerus* preserves and animates the forms of all creatures, which has been given by the *Forma aeterna et incommutabilis*—the *Sapientia*, the Son of God. *Numerus*, revealing itself by permeating Creation with its light, also incites the soul towards the contemplation of God through the heat of *Sapientia*. Finally, the inner light of *numerus* within the soul acts as the internal judge of whether something is good—coherent, harmonious, and true—according to the heavenly *numerus* and *Sapientia*. Indeed, when one compares the description of divine Providence in *Lib*. 2.17.46 (that it prevents the creaturely forms "from transgressing the laws of their own numbers") to *Ver. rel*. 7.13 ("that it does not transgress the order of things"), it appears that the concept of *ordo* and *numerus* are almost interchangeable in Augustine's thought, at least in the Thagaste period. Then, considering the "consubstantiality" of *Sapientia* and *numerus*, as well as their heavenly co-habitation, one may very well speak of a pneumatology of *numerus* in *De libero arbitrio*.

As Gerber shows, in the pre-Thagaste writings, Augustine tended to identify *numerus* with Christology—as that of the divine

84. Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* 192.
85. See, e.g., Augustine, *Civ*. 15.22.
86. Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 200.

Intellectus—rather than pneumatology.[87] For example, in *Ord*. 2, Augustine explicitly associates *numerus* with the immortal *ratione desuper*—the Son of God who is the intellectual principle and the archetype behind all things—discerned through the liberal arts.[88] In other words, the Son, as the divine *ratio*, is the very ground of the mathematical order of reality which revealed by *disciplina* of the liberal arts—in particular the *quadrivium*: geometry, astronomy, music, and arithmetic.[89] But the distinct role of the Spirit with regards to this mathematical order was not explicated by Augustine in these early writings.[90]

Recall that in the earliest section of his argument regarding *numerus* in *Lib*. 2 (13.20–13.24), Augustine asserts that the "rationality and truth of *numerus* is present to all rational beings" and that this *leges* is eternal and immutable.[91] If the *numerus* of *De libero arbitrio* is indeed pneumatological, one can see that Augustine now sees the rational structure of the cosmos not only as the work of the Son alone, but as the cooperative work of the Son and the Spirit. Then, one may posit a certain development in Augustine's pneumatology, in which the distinction between his Christology and pneumatology had been further clarified. Now, the Son provides the form of each creature—and of Creation as a

87. Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 45–54. Here, I generally agree with Gerber's suggestion of an early "number Christology" in Augustine that appears from *Epistula* 3 and *Ord*. 2, although there does seem to be pneumatological elements already present even in *De ordine*.

88. Augustine, *Ord*. 1.8.25 (*PL* 32.989); 2.14.50 (*PL* 32.1018). See also Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 94–102.

89. Augustine, *Ord*. 2.14.39–2.16.44.

90. Gerber, *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 162–67, 182–200. Gerber points out that, prior to the Thagaste writings, Augustine did not hypostatize *ordo* as a distinct personal agent. For example, *ordo*, *numerus*, *ratio*, and *forma* are essentially synonyms in *De ordine*. But by the time that he wrote *De vera religione*, Augustine had made the conceptual distinction between *forma* and *ordo* and hypostatized *ordo* as the Spirit. Especially, in *Ver*. *rel*. 42.79, Augustine had already identified the role of *numerus* as the preserver and the animator of form.

91. *ratio et veritas numeri omnibus ratiocinantibus praesto est* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.13.20 [*PL* 32.1251]). Augustine had made essentially the same arguments earlier in *Ord*. 2.19.50 and *Immort*. *an*. 2.2.

whole—thereby granting it its very being, and the Spirit assigns the numbers appropriate to its form, continuously preserving and animating its being. The Son, as the eternal *forma*, is still the very principle and archetype behind the rational order; but it is now the Spirit who sustains this mathematical order as *numerus*. Furthermore, in addition to his early idea of *ordo,* the pneumatological concept of *numerus* now also includes a fundamental principle of *movement*, and hence *life*. Perhaps this also represents Augustine's deepening reflection on the Spirit's role as the Gift and Giver of Life. The distinction that we have observed between *forma/species* and *numerus/ordo* is likely to be a philosophical corollary of this maturing pneumatology; but this distinction is also interesting in itself in view of Augustine's Christian Pythagoreanism.

In the tradition of Neopythagoreanism that Augustine received, numbers were often identified with or compared to the substantial and ideal Forms. But Neopythagoreanism was by no means a monolithic school of thought, since figures such as Nicomachus, Plotinus, and Iamblichus all presented different thoughts with regards to the metaphysical place of number in relation to the ideal Form. Albertson explains that these were the various responses to the perennial problem that plagued the Neopythagorean tradition: the competition between the two mediating principles of the Stoic and Platonic λόγος and the Pythagorean ἀριθμός.[92] For Nicomachus, numbers, together with Forms or "categories," order and structure the material world; in fact, numbers are the very principle underlying even the Forms.[93] As Albertson notes, Nicomachus was able to harmonize λόγος and ἀριθμός as two distinct but "coeval" principles of metaphysical mediation.[94] Responding to Aristotle's argument that numbers have no relation to Forms, Plotinus made a distinction between intelligible (substan-

92. Albertson, *Mathematical Theologies*, 46–48, 61–62.

93. O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*, 14–23. In particular, O'Meara notes, "Nicomachus' 'categories' are not categories at all (in the Aristotelian sense), but rather Platonic Forms" (17).

94. Albertson, *Mathematical Theologies*, 57–58.

tial) numbers and mathematical (monadic) numbers.[95] The former are qualitative, and the latter—as images of the former—are quantitative and mere abstractions from sensible objects.[96] Moreover, intelligible numbers are the essentially identified with the Forms and belong to the λόγος and the νοῦς (Intellect).[97] Thus, Plotinus effectually eliminated the mediation of ἀριθμός from his metaphysical system, in favor of the λόγος/νοῦς—the second hypostasis.[98] On the other hand, Iamblichus all but subsumed λόγος under ἀριθμός. For Iamblichus, multiple degrees of numbers mediate the entirety of reality: not only the sensible to the intelligible but also the soul to the divine.[99] In addition to the Plotinian intelligible numbers, the "physical numbers" reveal to the soul the very principles—the formal, material, and efficient causes—that order and move the material world; and the mathematical numbers guide the

95. Against the students of Plato, namely Pseusippus and Xenocrates, Aristotle argued that since numbers cannot have a separate ontological existence apart from physical objects, numbers cannot be related to ideal Forms. For Aristotle, there is only one kind of number, which is the purely quantitative *mathematical* or *arithmetic* numbers. *Ideal* numbers do not exist, and numbers cannot have any qualitative significance whatsoever. Hence, he concluded, "the arithmetical numbers are monadic" (ὅ γ' ἀριθμητικὸς ἀριθμὸς μοναδικός ἐστιν) (*Metaph*. 1076a–1084a). See also Slaveva-Griffin, *Plotinus on Number*, 58–63.

96. Plotinus, *Enn*. 5.5.4; 6.6.2–4, 9. In particular, intelligible number emanates from the Monad as the principle of multiplicity in the intelligible, constituting a complementary source of multiplicity and being together with the Indefinite Dyad. More specifically, the substantial number is the substantial form which makes something to be one coherent being, instead of a scattered indefiniteness. In comparison, mathematical numbers—like for Aristotle—have little ontological significance, except that they are the quantitative image of the non-quantitative substantial numbers (see Slaveva-Griffin, *Plotinus on Number*, 64–70).

97. Plotinus, *Enn*. 5.1.5; 6.6.10–11. See also Slaveva-Griffin, *Plotinus on Number*, 85–100. As Slaveva-Griffin explains, intelligible numbers are "Being standing in multiplicity" and hence are "ontologically equal and inseparable [with Being]" (*Plotinus on Number*, 90).

98. Albertson, *Mathematical Theologies*, 50.

99. Iamblichus specifically took issue with Plotinus's view of Mathematical (monadic) numbers, which he considered to be still too Aristotelian. Hence, arithmetic as a methodology was much more important for Iamblichus than it was for Plotinus (see Albertson, *Mathematical Theologies*, 62–65).

contemplating soul to the "divine numbers"—the very order of divinity.[100]

Augustine seems to have initially accepted the Plotinian view,[101] relating the intelligible number and Form to the Son—the divine *Intellectus* and the *Verbum*.[102] Augustine also initially followed Plotinus into making the distinction between *numerus intellegibilis* and *sensibilis numerus*, regarding the latter as mere "quantities of bodies" which are in "poverty" compared to the former.[103] But by the time of writing *De libero arbitrio*, Augustine had distinguished the concept of *numerus* from *forma*, regarding them as two distinct but inseparable principles of divine Providence. Moreover, against the Plotinian position, Augustine argues that mathematical numbers are not mere abstractions but have valid ontological existence (2.8.20–2.8.24). Much like Nicomachus, Augustine now conceives of *Sapientia* and *numerus*—the Son and the Spirit—as coeval and harmonious agents of mediation who cooperate to structure and preserve the created order.[104] Hence, Augustine was able to formulate a satisfying *Christian* solution to the Neopythagorean problem of competing mediating principles, by means of the pro-Nicene theology of consubstantiality as well as Scriptural exegesis. Moreover, similarly to Iamblichus, the pneumatological *numerus* serves a spiritual role of guiding the soul toward the *visio Dei*—the *Numerus sempiter-*

100. O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*, 44–51, 62–66, 79–91. Hence, as Albertson writes, "mathematical operations for Iamblichus amount to theurgic rituals. When properly executed their activities divinize the soul and reveal divine mysteries" (*Mathematical Theologies*, 63).

101. *ut quoniam numerus ille intellegibilis infinite crescit, non tamen infinite minuitur, nam non cum licet ultra monadem risolvere; contra sensibilis* (Augustine, *Epistula* 3.2 [*PL* 33.64]). In particular, his description of the *exitus* and *reditus* of intelligible number (*numerus intellegibilis*) and sensible number (*sensibilis numerus*) from the *Monas* is distinctively Plotinian (cf. Plotinus, *Enn*. 6.6.2–3).

102. Gerber makes this case convincingly in *Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 45–54, 94–98.

103. *nam quid est aliud sensibilis numerus, nisi corporeorum vel corporum quantitas? . . . Et ideo fortasse merito philosophi in rebus intellegibilibus divitias ponunt, in sensibilibus egestatem* (Augustine, *Epistula* 3.2 [*PL* 33.64]).

104. Albertson, *Mathematical Theologies*, 68.

nus.[105] Then, one can observe in *lib. arb.* a certain development with regards to his Christian Pythagoreanism,[106] as he continued to synthesize his appropriation of the pagan philosophical traditions with the teachings of the Scriptures and the pro-Nicene tradition. Indeed, the identification of *numerus* with the Spirit and its distinction from *forma* does appear to be the result of his reading of scriptural passages such as Eccl. 7:25, Wis 8:1, and 6:16 through a pro-Nicene theological lens, namely that of the consubstantiality of the Son and the Spirit and their inseparable operations.[107]

Conclusion

St. Augustine's *number pneumatology* in *Lib*. 2 grants us a glimpse into two dimensions of his intellectual development during the critical period between 391 and 396: the maturation of a pro-Nicene pneumatology and the creative synthesis of a Christian Pythagoreanism. It reveals Augustine's deeply Christian approach to philosophy—in this case, his Pythagorean theory of *numerus*—where his appropriations of pagan philosophical traditions were always normed by his reading of the Scriptures and his reception of the Christian theological tradition. Augustine's *number pneumatology* that emerges from *De libero arbitrio* is that the Holy Spirit preserves and animates the form of all creatures and the whole Creation through *numerus* and guides the soul towards the contemplation of God in the divine *Sapientia*, who works inseparably with the Spirit in providing form and revealing the Fa-

105. Indeed, John Milbank has recently pointed out the "theurgic" element in Augustine's Christian Pythagorean theology (see "Confession of Time").

106. Of course, this does not demonstrate in any concrete manner that Augustine was directly appropriating these thinkers. Nevertheless, what is significant is that Augustine's position on numbers has clearly departed from his initial Plotinian view due to his engagement with the Christian Scriptures and tradition.

107. Ultimately, this should not be seen as a radical discontinuity in his thought but rather as a genuine intellectual development in Augustine. The essential elements of this *numerus pneumatology* were already in place from his much earlier writings in the form of the *ordo pneumatology*, albeit requiring some deeper dialectics with his maturing Christian faith.

ther. The modern world, much like that of the Pythagorean imagination, is filled with numbers—in the form of the mathematical sciences, statistics, technology, etc. To the modern readers dwelling in such a world, *De libero arbitrio* reminds us that these numbers are the very "footprints of Wisdom," through which we may perceive the sustaining and life-giving work of the Spirit in order to ultimately contemplate the Wisdom of the Creator. Augustine's beautiful doxology of the *Sapientia*, who is revealed by *Numerus*, seems to be a fitting conclusion:

> Wisdom! The sweetest light of a mind made pure! Woe to those who abandon you as guide and wander aimlessly around your footprints (*vestigiis*), who love your nods instead of you and forget what you hint at. For you do not cease to intimate to us who you are and how great you are; all the splendor of Creation is your nods [toward us].[108]

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108. *Vae qui derelinquunt te ducem, et oberrant in vestigiis tuis, qui nutus tuos pro te amant, et obliviscuntur quid innuas, o suavissima lux purgatae mentis sapientia! non enim cessas innuere nobis quae et quanta sis; et nutus tui sunt omne creaturarum decus* (Augustine, *Lib*. 2.16.43 [*PL* 32.1264]).

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